

Shattuck Observatory  
Dartmouth College Campus  
Hanover  
Grafton County  
New Hampshire

HABS No. NH-69

HABS  
NH  
5-HAND  
1B-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

## SHATTUCK OBSERVATORY

Location: Dartmouth College, Hanover, Grafton County,  
New Hampshire.

Present Owner: Dartmouth College.

Present Occupant: Dartmouth College Astronomy Department.

Present Use: Observatory.

Brief Statement  
of Significance: This building, one of the earlier buildings at  
Dartmouth, is a largely unchanged example of a  
small, simple observatory. It was built for  
Dartmouth's prominent astronomer, Professor Ira  
Young, and designed by his brother, Ammi B. Young,  
who at that time was supervising architect of the  
U. S. Treasury Department.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: Dartmouth College.
2. Date of erection: 1854.
3. Architect, builder, donor: The building was made possible by a gift from Dr. George C. Shattuck, Dartmouth class of 1803, for whom the building is named. Shattuck's gift stipulated that Professor Ira Young, Dartmouth College astronomer, was to supervise the project, and that Young's brother, Ammi Burnham Young, was to design the building. Ammi B. Young was at this time supervising architect of the Treasury Department which position he held from 1852-1862.
4. Original plans, construction, cost: Various letters, reports and records relating to the building of the observatory are preserved at Dartmouth. The cost was about \$4,800.00.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: Since 1955, the original wood framed, metal clad, revolving dome has

been replaced and the building renovated. No other important alterations are indicated in the references. The HABS photograph shows the original dome.

6. References

- a. Wendell H. Williams, The Architectural History of the Observatory, (Student Thesis in Carpenter Library, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, 1934).
  - b. Interview with Professor Hugh Morrison, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.
  - c. Osmund R. Overby, "Ammi B. Young in the Connecticut Valley," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, vol. XIX, no. 3 (October, 1960), pp. 119-123.
- B. Likely Sources not yet Investigated: Early views of the building probably exist either in Dartmouth publications or in the files of the Dartmouth College Photographic Bureau, 25 North Main Street, Hanover, New Hampshire.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: Small, simple building whose design is controlled by its purposes and function, little changed.
2. Condition of Fabric: The building is sound and well maintained.

B. Technical Description of the Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: One story T-shaped building with a two story, domed, circular unit of 20' diameter at the intersection of the leg and cross of the T.
2. Foundations: Large blocks of roughly cut granite.
3. Wall construction: White painted brick.
4. Windows and shutters: 4/4, 6/6 and 9/9 light, double hung windows. Adjustable slat shutters. Granite sills.
5. Roof
  - a. Shape, covering:- Low pitched gabled roof over T-shaped

section, covered with metal. Approximately hemispherical, revolving dome over the circular part of the structure with a sliding telescope opening. Original wood framed, metal covered dome replaced by present metal dome.

- b. Cornice: Simple brick corbelled cornices. On the circular section of the building, three band cornice, the lowest band three brick courses high, stepped out to the next band two courses high, stepped out to the top band, one course high.

Two band high cornice on the T-shaped section of the building, the lowest two courses high, the top one course; cornice returned slightly at the gable ends.

#### C. Site

1. General setting and orientation: Leg of the T-shaped building points approximately east. Building located on a small, grassy rise, in a rather secluded, wooded area on the edge of the Dartmouth campus.
2. Walks and driveways: Gravel.
3. Landscaping: Informal with lawn and shrubs.

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National Park Service - September  
1959.